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statement" of the type of political organisation in the feudal period (p. 213).

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MORALS: A TREATISE ON THE PSYCHO-SOCIOLOGICAL BASES OF ETHICS. By Professor G. L. Duprat. Translated by W. J. Greenstreet, M. A., F. R. A. S. London: The Walter Scott Publishing Co., Ltd., 1903, pp. xv, 382.

This is by no means a striking or remarkable book, but it is very sensible, and both interesting and suggestive, and not least so as illustrating some of the perplexities of ethical thought at the present day.

It is to be regretted that the translation is not more satisfactory. A long list of passages—awkwardly rendered or wrongly rendered—might be drawn up, and also many cases of carelessness in statement of references in the footnotes might be noticed. Our limits, however, will only permit of a general indication of Professor Duprat's main problem, and of the principles underlying his attempted solution.

Stated briefly, his problem is as follows: What can guarantee stability in Morals? The ideas of good and evil, of justice and injustice, of what is lawful and what is forbidden, seem more and more to be granted a merely conventional or even provisional worth; and the "social conscience," the moral ideas and sentiments of the community as such, seem to be in a state of hesitation, wavering, and uncertainty. Religion and Philosophy are powerless to afford to the age the moral stability which it needs. Substitutes like Utilitarianism and the Religion of Humanity have been proved failures.

In the main, these statements may be accepted. The failure of what has been called, in the English-speaking world, "Moral Philosophy" is almost impressive. And in the interesting but singularly ineffective development of "Idealism" in the last quarter of the nineteenth century we have a mode of thought whose accredited exponents usually define "Ethical Theory" in such a way as to make it devoid of all practical significance.*

* This is implied in the constant contention that it is not the business of Ethical Theory to lay down *any* "rule of conduct." Professor Bosanquet goes so far as to stigmatise as "Casuistry" any attempt to derive guiding principles from "Ethical Science."

What, then, does M. Duprat propose? His hope is that moral unity will be realized if Ethics can be based on Science in general or on one of the Sciences in particular. He does in fact bring himself face to face with the question that presses hardly on every reformer of moral theory who talks of finding a "scientific" basis. Go beneath phrases to meanings: have you really found a "scientific" basis, in the true sense of the words, which can be put in the place of the foundation said to be crumbling away? Great carelessness both of thought and expression prevails among writers on this subject at the present time; and Sidgwick's reiterated criticism of Spencer might be given a wider range. M. Duprat does well to point out the abuse of terms involved in qualifying as "scientific" an ethic which is connected with a scientific theory of doubtful value. Of Spencer he observes: "Mr. Spencer has neglected to show that to obey the law of evolution is a duty; hence he has failed in one of the first obligations which are imposed on a moralist—that of laying down the obligation" (p. 47). Knowledge of Nature is not sufficient for a basis; "it cannot enable us to evolve new types; it cannot lead to important modifications; it cannot show us the necessity of innovation and invention" (p. 24). And "invention" is as indispensable in Morality as in Science or Industry. This striking admission is not of any importance for the further development of the author's position. In the end we find him minimising to the utmost the value of individual invention in morality. He refuses to ascribe any importance to the work of the prophet. He makes moral ideas a function of the social life, and nothing more.

It is when the last-mentioned statement is made into an "exclusive proposition," as here, that (in the opinion of the present writer, and possibly of many others) it ceases to be an important ethical principle and becomes a source of serious fallacies. It becomes, in fact, equivalent to the doctrine, which Mr. G. E. Moore has recently criticised most effectively, that in the moral unity "the part has no significance or meaning apart from its whole" (*Principia Ethica*, p. 34). All that Professor Duprat says in support of it is to repeat the stale metaphor of the "health of the organism" being necessarily connected with the "health of the element"; and to proceed to show what no one denies, that the higher human faculties are social faculties. Nevertheless, on other grounds, the whole treatment here given to the "socio-

logical" aspects of Ethics may be heartily welcomed, as showing the utter insufficiency of what Spencer called "the Biological view" either for a basis for Ethics or for an explanation of the moral characteristics of humanity. This last conclusion is indirectly involved in the author's discussion.

Professor Duprat's fundamental principle is stated as follows: "As long as we confine ourselves to representing Nature as inevitably obeying certain laws, then we are at liberty to consider ourselves as outside that blind Nature which is the sport of fatality; no obligation is imposed on us. But as soon as human thought is exhibited to us as in its turn obeying certain laws, conceiving a principle as necessary and therefore as obligatory (the principle of seeking everywhere for causes, or that of establishing out of every diversity a system), from that moment a duty is laid down. . . . The idea of rational activity is imposed on us, because, owing to our mental constitution, we cannot form any other conception; the idea of that rational activity embraces the idea of system, and involves as *duty in general* the obligation of realising in the whole domain of human life a system of systems, a perfect co-ordination of all the individual and social functions" (p. 48). In the light of this general definition of moral action, he proceeds to study the psychological and the sociological conditions of morality. We cannot admit that the desired scientific basis has been found. M. Duprat in effect takes "systematic action" as the essence (in the Aristotelian sense) of man, and he has not succeeded in showing the connection between this abstract idea and the discussion of particular moral problems which follows.

It would be quite unjust to conclude without saying that the discussion of the details of social life is the most interesting part of the book. There is hardly any social question in the air at the present day which is not touched on in a suggestive way, and some of these questions are really illuminated.

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BUSHIDO, THE SOUL OF JAPAN. An Exposition of Japanese Thought. By Inazo Nitobé, A. M., Ph. D. The Leeds & Biddle Co., Philadelphia, 1900. Pp. ix, 127.

At a time when the world is watching the sad spectacle of two civilized nations engaged in a bloody fight, bent on crippling and